

Our design will target busy people with flexible schedules. We want to find individuals who have clear deadlines, but choose for themselves how they meet those deadlines. Our technology will help them optimize their schedules within the context of their pre-existing roles. We have three groups of individuals in mind: independent contractors working from home, writers and editors at The Daily, and professors at the UW. Independent contractors (specifically software developers) will help us understand how an unmanaged person who has deadlines that are weeks or months away manages to plan so far in advance. Writers and editors at The Daily, the UW's student-run newspaper, will show us how short term goals and publishing deadlines affect an individual's time balance on a professional and personal level. Their additional academic responsibilities will reveal how they prioritize different tasks. Our final group is professors at the UW who juggle lecturing, assigning classwork, and research, all the while being available for meetings with staff and students. Observing what methods our participants already use to manage their time and asking what goals they wish to achieve will help us design a technology that will balance their workload and meet those goals.

When we meet with independent contractors who work from home, we will go to their home offices to see what projects they are working on and what type of time management systems they are using. For school newspaper writers, we will go to their place of work and observe their current workload as well as their editing process. For professors, we will interview them in their offices and ask them about their daily routines. For each person, we will focus on the same set of primary questions:

- What does your calendar look like?
- What other systems do you have in place for time management?
- What kind of time management system do you expect to use?
- What was the last time you didn't follow your schedule/missed a deadline? What went wrong?
- What do you do in your free time?
- How do you make time for yourself?
- How much sleep do you usually get?
- Why do you not go to bed on time?
- What is your ideal balance of time?
- What keeps you from this balance/helps you achieve it?

Since our focus is on time management and time balance, we will be conducting more of an interview style contextual inquiry. This is because none of us have the time to follow these people around all day to see how they actually manage their time and make time related decisions. Instead, we will be asking them questions about how they manage their time and balance their time between work, socializing, and sleep. Additionally, we will ask them to demonstrate how they plan out their schedules so that we can see some of how they make their decision. We will inquire about how and why they make the decisions they do when planning out their schedules to give us a better understanding behind how they achieve their current balance.